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CONVENTION ON PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED TO BE EXCESSIVELY INJURIOUS OR TO HAVE INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Peter GOOSEN (South Africa)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-ninth session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/79 of 16 December 1993.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1994, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 13 October, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 53 to 66, 68 to 72 and 153. The deliberations on those items took place at the 3rd to 10th meetings, from 17 to 24 October (see A/C.1/49/PV.3-10). Structured discussions of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach took place from 25 to 27 and on 31 October and 1 November. Consideration of draft resolutions on those items took place at the 12th to 16th meetings, on 3, 4, 7 and 9 November (see A/C.1/49/PV.12-16). Action on draft resolutions on those items took place at the 19th to 25th meetings, from 14 to 18 November (see A/C.1/49/PV.19-25).

4. In connection with item 66, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (A/49/421);

(b) Letter dated 25 June 1994 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt to the Secretary-General transmitting the texts of the documents adopted by the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo from 31 May to 3 June 1994 (A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/49/L.23

5. On 2 November, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, submitted a draft resolution entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects" (A/C.1/49/L.23), which was later also sponsored by Albania, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, the Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, Turkmenistan and the United States of America. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Sweden at the 15th meeting, on 9 November.

6. At the 19th meeting, on 14 November, the Secretary of the Committee made a statement concerning the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.23 (see A/C.1/49/PV.19).

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.23 without a vote (see para. 8).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 32/152 of 19 December 1977, 35/153 of 12 December 1980, 36/93 of 9 December 1981, 37/79 of 9 December 1982, 38/66 of 15 December 1983, 39/56 of 12 December 1984, 40/84 of 12 December 1985, 41/50 of 3 December 1986, 42/30 of 30 November 1987, 43/67 of 7 December 1988, 45/64 of 4 December 1990, 46/40 of 6 December 1991, 47/56 of 9 December 1992 and 48/79 of 16 December 1993,

Recalling with satisfaction the adoption, on 10 October 1980 of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, 1/ together with the Protocol on Non-Detectable Fragments (Protocol I), 1/ the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices (Protocol II) 1/ and the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons (Protocol III), 1/

Recalling the role played by the International Committee of the Red Cross in the elaboration of the Convention and the Protocols annexed thereto,

Noting with satisfaction that, the conditions set forth in article 5 of the Convention having been met, the Convention and the three Protocols annexed thereto entered into force on 2 December 1983,

Recalling the commitment by the States that are parties to the Convention and the Protocols annexed thereto to respect the objectives and the provisions thereof,

Noting that, in conformity with article 8 of the Convention, conferences may be convened to examine amendments to the Convention or to any of the Protocols thereto, to examine additional protocols concerning other categories of conventional weapons not covered by the existing Protocols or to review the scope and application of the Convention and the Protocols annexed thereto and to examine any proposed amendments or additional protocols,

Noting with satisfaction that a group of governmental experts has been established to prepare a conference to review the Convention and the Protocols annexed thereto in conformity with article 8, paragraph 3, of the Convention,

Noting further with satisfaction that the group of governmental experts has held three meetings in 1994 making significant progress, with priority given to the question of anti-personnel land-mines,

Noting also that the group of governmental experts and other international meetings have discussed possible restrictions on the use of other weapon categories at present not covered by the Convention and the Protocols annexed thereto,

Reaffirming its conviction that a general and verifiable agreement on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons would significantly reduce the suffering of civilians and combatants,

Being desirous of reinforcing international cooperation in the area of prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons, and particularly for the removal of minefields, mines and booby traps,

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1/ See The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook, vol. 5: 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.IX.4), appendix VII.

Recalling in this respect its resolutions 48/7 of 19 October 1993 and 49/... of ... 1994 on assistance in mine clearance,

1. Registers its satisfaction with the reports of the Secretary-General; 2/

2. Welcomes the fact that additional States have signed, ratified or accepted the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which was opened for signature in New York on 10 April 1981, or have acceded to the Convention;

3. Urgently calls upon all States that have not yet done so to take all measures to become parties, as soon as possible, to the Convention and upon successor States to take appropriate measures so that ultimately access to this instrument will be universal;

4. Calls upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as depositary of the Convention and the three Protocols annexed thereto, to continue to inform it periodically of accessions to the Convention and the Protocols;

5. Welcomes the request made by States parties on 22 December 1993 that the Secretary-General convene at an appropriate time, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 3, of the Convention, a conference to review the Convention, and establish a group of governmental experts to prepare the review conference;

6. Takes note with satisfaction of the progress made by the group of governmental experts in reviewing the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices (Protocol II) and in discussing other weapon categories at present not covered by the Convention;

7. Takes note of the decisions by the group of governmental experts to hold an additional meeting at Geneva from 9 to 20 January 1955 and to request the Secretary-General to convene the review conference at Geneva during the period from 25 September to 13 October 1995;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to continue furnishing needed assistance and to ensure the provision of services to the group of governmental experts and to the conference to review the Convention;

9. Again calls upon the maximum number of States to attend the conference, to which the States parties may invite interested non-governmental organizations, in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross;

10. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fiftieth session the item entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects".

2/ A/49/421, A/49/275 and Add.1 and A/49/357 and Add.1.